

imagine

a democratic alternative to the monarchy

JUNE 2ND



REPUBLIC DAY

reclaim the day

PAGES 2 & 3 FOR DETAILS

Republic

The Campaign for an
Elected Head of State

REPUBLIC DAY

Republic Day is a time to stand up and be counted, a day to celebrate the long tradition of British republicanism and a day to push our message forward.

This is the very first Republic Day, and Republic is keen to make it a great success.

We have lined up an impressive schedule of media opportunities and events to mark this historic occasion. Executive Chair Ruby Lescott recently explained the significance of Republic Day to reporters, "It is the symbolism of this day that makes this a great milestone for democracy. This is the first of what we hope will be many Republic Days, and the start of an even louder and stronger campaign for the abolition of the monarchy."

With Republic Day falling on a Friday, this year it will be marked over the course of two days.

JUNE 2ND

PETITION

Republic will be delivering its petition to No 10 Downing Street in the afternoon of Friday June 2nd. The Republic delegation will include Claire Rayner, plus a number of leading Republic campaigners. It will be a set feature of Republic Day, done to highlight the ever increasing number of people who are signing up to the cause.

OPEN LETTER

Republic will be sending an open letter to the Prime Minister, Tony Blair. The letter, to be signed by many of our well known supporters, will be calling on the PM to acknowledge Republic Day, and to demonstrate his commitment to

democratic principles by playing his part in promoting a debate on the future of the monarchy. It will also point to his own stated sentiments about the meaning of democracy, and why his views do not sit well with the idea of hereditary monarchy.

REPUBLIC DAY BASH '06

In the evening of June 2nd there will be a celebratory party at the Freemasons Arms, Covent Garden, with a free buffet, VIP guest speakers and a chance to win great prizes in the Republic Raffle. This isn't just for members, all are welcome, as Graham Smith explained, "This is the time when we put some fun into the campaign. Republic has sent an open invitation, so bring friends, family and acquaintances." Details are opposite. Numbers are limited so please book early.

JUNE 3RD

Saturday is a day for further action, with a street stand being held in the vicinity of Covent Garden and leafleting events being held by members around the country (details are opposite).

The Covent Garden stand is being organised by local London campaigners, and free Republic Day Action packs are being made available to members in other parts of the country who are keen to do their bit.

GENERAL MEETING

In the afternoon of the Saturday Republic will be holding a special Extraordinary General Meeting. The EGM has been called to allow Republic to finalise plans to become a company limited by guarantee, a

major step in the development of Republic as a serious and sophisticated campaigning organisation. The afternoon will conclude with a debate and speeches from leading campaigners and a VIP guest. ■

Reclaim the Day

It's no coincidence that June 2nd also happens to be the anniversary of the Queen's coronation.

Republic believes national days should be about the people and the nation, not the accession of one person to an inherited public office.

It is our aim, with each passing year, to reclaim June 2nd as a day to celebrate democracy and the great British tradition of republicanism.

Students Needed

We're looking for students to set up student Republic societies around the country. Republic Day would be an excellent opportunity to get organised and promote the cause. If you'd like to find out more about how to do this give us a call on 08708 508 825 or email g.smith@republic.org.uk ■

Volunteers Needed for Republic Day

Can you help on the day? We would like to hear from you if you're free on Saturday June 3rd, to help run the Republic stand in Covent Garden.

If you can help please call Graham Smith on 07747 608 770 or email g.smith@republic.org.uk for further details about where and when the stand will be. ■

www.republic.org.uk/rday

Republic Day Bash '06

The *Republic Day Bash '06* is the fun part of Republic Day. It's a chance to meet other supporters and members in a relaxing and enjoyable setting. There will be a bar, buffet and the chance to win quality prizes. Entry to the *Bash* is just £10.*

The *Republic Day Bash '06* will be on Friday June 2nd, from 7pm until normal closing time, at the Freemasons Arms, 81-82 Long Acre, Covent Garden, London WC2E 9NG.

Don't forget, there will be plenty to get involved with on the Saturday, so if you don't live in London why not make a weekend of it and stay overnight?

*Entry cost does not include drinks from the bar. All proceeds go to Republic.

Taking a Stand: Covent Garden

Come and join the action at Covent Garden. From 11am on Saturday June 3rd Republic supporters will be out on the streets talking to passers by, handing out leaflets, gathering

petition signatures and signing up new members. The more supporters there the better, so come along on the day and help out. For further details simply call 08708 508 825.

General Meeting: June 3rd

At 2:30pm on Saturday 3rd June there will be a Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) for Republic members at Friends House, 173-177 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ (opposite Euston station).

The main topic for debate will be the proposal to turn Republic into a limited company. This will be followed by debate and a talk by a guest speaker. Further details will be sent to all members separately.

It is very important this meeting has a good turnout, so that the Executive Committee can receive the members' authority to become a company. Please support the campaign, support the General Meeting.

In your area

If you can't make it to London, don't worry; there is plenty you can do to

support Republic Day.

To do your bit simply call 08708 508 825 during normal business hours, or email rday@republic.org.uk and ask for a FREE Republic Day Action Pack.

We can also put you in touch with other local supporters who might be interested in joining in the fun.

Some simple ideas for supporting the day in your area might include; writing to your local paper, telling them about the day, what it means and what the campaign is about; handing out leaflets in your local high street, or taking the time to place leaflets in racks and on notice boards around your area; writing to your local MP or councillors, asking them to support Republic Day and the campaign for a republic. ■

"Tell your grandchildren – yes, I was there for the very first Republic Day!"
Ruby Lescott (see *Message from the Chair*, page 6).

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Letters

Looking at your article, *What's in a name*, I got to thinking about this. I like the idea of all the countries in the union being an equal part of the union.

To my way of thinking we should go down the path of creating a federal republic. Each country should have its own parliament looking after the interests and running of each of their own country but representatives from each country should be sent to a federal parliament somewhere in Britain. This would take democracy closer to the people who vote the politicians in and still form a united British republic that all would support.

Fred Chapman
Hartlepool

♦

My wife and I did not know, when we

booked tickets for a performance of Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* at the Welsh Millennium centre, that the March 1st event would coincide with the Queen's opening of the new Welsh Assembly building.

When we arrived at the theatre we had to queue outside in the cold and go through the sort of security barriers that we have become used to at airports. The average age of the British opera-goer is 50+ and many people older and colder than us were complaining vociferously. The reason for the whole inconvenience was that Charles and Camilla were attending the performance. I have never heard so many home counties accents complaining about the Royal family! "Why should we have to wait in the freezing cold just because those two are coming....", and similar sentiments, were heard not once but many times.

When the Prince and Duchess arrived in the theatre there was no applause, no standing and of course no National Anthem. Well done Wales!

To begin with I was annoyed: I was

cold; the beautiful foyer of the building was turned into an airport security area... But then I remembered the complaining unhappy atmosphere that was created amongst the opera-going community and felt much better. As a Republican may I say to Charles and Camilla: "Carry-on annoying the British middle-classes, and you'll be helping the cause!"

David Seddon
Derbyshire

■

We'd like to hear from you. Are you organising any local activities or do you have some views on the campaign or the issues that you'd like to share? Send your letters to imagine@republic.org.uk or to *Imagine*, PO Box 69, Brighton, BN50 9GS.

If you would like to contribute to Imagine email imagine@republic.org.uk or call Graham Smith on 08708 508 825 and ask for a copy of the Writer's Guidelines.

Republic demands suspension of Queen's meetings with PM

Responding to the admission from Lady Thatcher recently that: "anyone who believes that such meetings [between the Prime Minister and the monarch] are a mere formality would be greatly mistaken", Republic has called for an immediate suspension of the Queen's meetings with the Prime Minister. Graham Smith told reporters, "Monarchists constantly defend this outdated institution by claiming the Queen has no real powers, yet here we have an ex-Prime Minister saying quite the opposite."

Ruby Lescott, Executive Chair of Republic, added, "The Queen appears happy to overlook her unelected status to interfere in government business. The fact that these meetings are entirely unminuted and unreported is an affront to the voters who put the Prime Minister into office."

"Republic is calling for an immediate suspension of these meetings. It must be established exactly to what extent the Queen influences government decisions." ■

Republic goes global

Republic's media management is getting results right around the world. Graham Smith told the recent Spring Conference, "It is important that we get coverage abroad as well as in the UK. There are many expat Brits who are keen to support Republic, some of whom have told us they would return home were the monarchy to be abolished." He added, "It is also helpful in increasing our overall image and profile."

In the week leading up to the Queen's 80th birthday Republic received a lot of media interest at home and abroad, including; two interviews on Sky News, an interview for Meridian TV (Kent and East Sussex), debates or interviews on several local BBC Radio stations including Humberside, Derby, Northampton, Wales, Hampshire and Leeds. Other UK coverage included articles in the New Statesman, The Economist, The Observer and on the BBC News Online website.

We had press coverage in Canada, several papers in the US, Australia, Slovakia, Israel, China, Mauritius, Qatar, Bahrain and Japan. Foreign

TV and radio interviews were given in France, Germany, South Africa and for Australian ABC TV. *The Age* newspaper in Melbourne ran an opinion column (see page 7) which was also published by a local paper in Wales.

The South African coverage included an hour long debate on national radio. As if to underline the importance of reaching out beyond our borders, an expat living in South Africa heard the debate and immediately joined Republic, and offered to help raise local support for the campaign.

A lot of work still needs to be done to improve Republic's coverage at home. Graham Smith explained, "We still seem to experience some resistance from the mainstream media in this country. There is still a strong sense with many in the media that questions about the future of the monarchy are somehow impolite or inappropriate. We will continue to work at pressing the case for a fair hearing whenever the royals or the institution of the monarchy are given widespread coverage." ■

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Account Name _____

SORT CODE _____

BANK ACCOUNT NUMBER _____

Please pay: Republic; Bank: Co-operative Bank; Branch: Stockport
Account Number: 65083839; Sort Code: 08-92-99

* ☐ **£1 on the first day of each month until further notice.**

* ☐ **£ _____ on the first day of each month until further notice.**

(You will be entered for the 100 Club draw once for each pound received.)

***tick one**

Signature _____ Date _____

Welcome to the Republic 100 Club!

The *Club* is a simple way for Republic to raise money, while at the same time giving you the chance to win a cash prize, *every month!*

All you have to do is complete the £1 a month Standing Order form opposite, and send it to the address below.

Each month we draw two names from the list of *100 Clubbers*; the first name wins 25% of the takings, the second name wins 15%. The more tickets sold, the greater the prizes!

It couldn't be easier.

You can enter as many times as you like, by simply increasing the amount you pay into the *Club*. Each pound paid is a chance to WIN. So join today!

Return your entry to: FREEPOST RLZS-CBLK-RTLS, *Republic 100 Club*, PO Box 69, Brighton, BN50 9GS.

RULES: You must be over 16 years old to enter. Each name will be entered for the first full month after receipt of the form. Existing payments for membership cannot be accepted as payments for 100 Club purposes. 100 Club payments cannot be accepted as membership subscriptions. The draw will be conducted on the fifth day of each month. For further details call 08708 508 825. This is a lottery registered with Lewes District Council under the Lotteries and Amusements Act 1976 and promoted by Republic, PO Box 69, Brighton, BN50 9GS.

THE POWERS THAT BE

■ ADAM TOMKINS

One of the great myths about the British monarchy is that it is essentially harmless – that the Queen, despite her extraordinary status, has ‘no real power’. This myth is dangerously untrue for two reasons. The first is that the Queen does have real power. Only the Queen may appoint the prime minister. Only the Queen may dissolve Parliament (the act which triggers a general election). No Bill may become an Act of Parliament – no Bill may become law – without the assent of the Queen. An article in a later issue of *Imagine* will consider these powers in more detail, and will explore how and by whom they should be exercised in a republic.

In this article I want to examine the second reason why it is dangerous to believe that the monarchy is harmless and powerless. This reason concerns the importance within the British state of ‘prerogative powers’. The ‘prerogative’, sometimes called the ‘royal prerogative’, is the name our law gives to the legal powers of the Crown. In former times, all such powers would have been exercised by the monarch him- or herself and by the monarch’s close band of courtiers. Some of the Crown’s powers continue to be exercised in this way – those powers of the Queen listed above are examples. But the majority of the Crown’s powers are now exercised not by the Queen herself but by the institution formally known as Her Majesty’s Government. (Have you ever wondered why the British government is not the People’s Government, or even Parliament’s Government, but Her Majesty’s Government?)

Today’s government in Britain possesses astonishingly wide powers, which it enjoys solely by virtue of its relationship with the Crown. These are powers which our elected representatives in Parliament have not conferred upon the government, but which the government has inherited from the ancient power of the Crown.

The government’s prerogative powers cover a broad array of policy areas. The making of treaties, the

conduct of diplomacy, the deployment of the armed forces both within the UK and beyond its borders, the appointment and removal of ministers, the appointment of peers, the granting of honours, the organisation of the civil service and the granting and revoking of passports all fall within the scope of the government’s prerogative powers.

This has two practical consequences, both of some significance. The first is that a number of these powers are drawn up amazingly broadly, conferring extraordinary discretion on government ministers. The argument here is not that the government should not have *some* powers with regard to these matters. Plainly, the government needs some powers to conduct diplomacy or to deploy British troops, and so forth. But these powers should be clearly defined, limited, and proportionate. In a democracy the government should not be able to decide to deploy troops anywhere at any time for any reason (as the British government can). The government should be able to deploy troops only with the explicit authorisation of our elected representatives in Parliament and only when strictly necessary. The fact that the deployment of troops is a prerogative power derived from the Crown gives to the government more power than it would have in a mature republic.

The second practical consequence is that the exercise of the government’s prerogative powers is not as thoroughly scrutinised and held to account as is its exercise of other, ordinary powers. This is because both Parliament and the courts continue to exhibit greater reluctance to review prerogative powers than they do in relation to the government’s ordinary powers. It is as if they fear to tread on ground occupied by the Crown. In the leading case, decided twenty years ago, the House of Lords ruled that a number of prerogative powers remained *wholly* beyond the scope of judicial review, including the making of treaties, the deployment of the armed forces, the granting of honours and all of the powers remaining with

the Queen herself.

The government’s enjoyment of prerogative powers also has a symbolic consequence. *In a republic the government would have only those powers which are expressly conferred upon it by the people’s democratically elected representatives in Parliament.* This is a basic principle of republican democracy. Yet in Britain, for as long as the government continues to enjoy prerogative powers, we do not have a truly democratic government. We have a government that obtains a large chunk of its power from the Crown.

Parliament has several times in recent years debated proposals to change this, either by reducing or by abolishing altogether the government’s prerogative powers. The most recent occasion was a debate in the House of Lords on 3 March 2006 on a Bill introduced by the Liberal Democrat peer and human rights lawyer, Lord Lester. The Bill has no chance of becoming law, but the debate was a well informed one. It revealed the extent to which even Parliament remains under the lock and influence of the monarchy. Before the House of Lords could commence the debate, it had to be formally permitted to do so by the Queen – no parliamentary debate may take place in Westminster that touches on the Queen’s prerogatives without her express consent (so much for freedom of parliamentary expression!). A junior minister was required to report in the following terms: “My Lords, I have it in command from Her Majesty the Queen to acquaint the House that Her Majesty having been informed of the purport of the ... Bill, has consented to place her Prerogative and Interest, so far as they are affected by the Bill, at the disposal of Parliament ...”.

When Britain becomes a republic Parliament will need to revisit these issues and decide precisely what powers it wishes the government to have. Such an exercise will be just part of the renewal of British democracy that the move to a republic will generate. ■

This is the first in a series of articles by Adam Tomkins, Professor of Public Law at the University of Glasgow and author of *Our Republican Constitution*.

Spring Conference

On Saturday April 29th, Republic members gathered in Leeds for the very first Republic Spring Conference.

It turned out to be a great success, with Executive Chair Ruby Lescott proclaiming it to be, "an historic day, not only because it is the first Spring Conference, but also because it is the first time such an event has been held outside London."

Unfortunately the numbers were insufficient to hold an Extraordinary General Meeting, which had been planned to consider turning Republic into a limited company. However, the proposals were discussed by the Conference, and there was an overwhelming view that it was an important and necessary step to take.

The Conference began in earnest by debating the draft new policy document. The discussion was lively, with various views and amendments being put forward. There was a general consensus that the draft document, which outlines the proposal for an elected ceremonial Head of State, was taking Republic in the right direction. Some suggested it

be broadened to allow the possibility of supporting a republic with no Head of State.

The debate continued, going on to deal with other related issues, such as the disestablishment of the church, electoral reform, the House of Lords and the nature of our parliamentary democracy. However, there were strongly held views that Republic should remain focussed solely on the issue of the monarchy, so as to avoid diluting our support base.

After lunch reports were presented by Graham Smith, Campaign Coordinator, and William Summers on the broad campaign and Local Groups respectively. Graham's report set out the main projects and the successes over the autumn, winter and early spring periods, and took a broad look at plans for the remainder of the year. William focused on the



■ Stephen Haseler and Ruby Lescott chaired some great debates.

need for more local activity and the importance of encouraging members to involve themselves more at a local level.

The Conference ended after an interesting and entertaining talk from guest speaker Edward Pearce. Mr Pearce talked around the issue of the Lords, its connection to the monarchy and how best to reform the upper house. ■

The 2007 Spring Conference will be on Saturday April 21st, at a venue in Manchester.

A Message from the Chair



RUBY
LESCOTT

Once in a while our 'leaders' have to resort to pinching our ideas and pretending they're their own.

Gordon Brown recently made a speech to the Fabian society about what

Britishness means, and suggested that there should be a National British day. He must have been checking our website, because we were way ahead of him, and already planning something like that, but better – Republic Day.

We agree with Gordon – we should have a special day like France and the USA 'for a national celebration of who we are and what we stand for.' Republicans are patriots and proud of our achievements, so we've set the date for June 2nd 2006, (also known as Coronation day) to show that we are determined to live in a modern,

democratic Britain.

Mr Brown reminded his listeners that we were the first country to successfully assert the power of Parliament over the King. And republicans are proud of that, but it's a long time since the Bill of Rights – 1689 – and we still haven't taken that last step towards a true democracy. He said also that we should take citizenship seriously – members of Republic will be asserting just how strongly we feel about being citizens, not subjects, when we are out and about on June 2nd and 3rd.

We're already attracting media attention, so start planning your local activity now, and tell your local press and broadcasting stations what you'll be doing in your locality. Don't worry if your group is small – this will be a very exciting and symbolic moment. Make sure you'll be able to tell your grandchildren – yes, I was there for the very first Republic day! ■

Did you receive the last *Imagine*?

The last edition of *Imagine* (with the Scottish flag cover) was sent out in March. If you are a paid up member and didn't receive either the email version or printed version, please let us know.

Remember, if you do receive the email version of *Imagine* you are welcome to receive the printed copy instead. Just let us know by emailing enquiries@republic.org.uk. ■

NEW ADDRESS FOR REPUBLIC

Don't forget, Republic has a new postal address: PO BOX 69, BRIGHTON, BN50 9GS.

Opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily the view or policy of Republic, its staff or its Executive Committee.

Birthday Blues

As the Queen turns 80 this month some very serious questions must be asked about her future role and the future of the monarchy itself, says GRAHAM SMITH.

Although still able to do the occasional walkabout and shake hands with dwindling crowds of fawning subjects, the Queen is already reported to be handing over her responsibilities to Prince Charles. If the Queen Mother is a guide, the Queen could be on the throne for another twenty years, yet with every year that passes she will be less and less able to perform the duties that are required of her as monarch.

It is quite unacceptable for Charles to be taking on any of the Queen's duties. Not only does he have no official constitutional position, there is also widespread unease about the man who will be King.

It is time that monarchists, and the Queen, accept that the hereditary system is clearly failing. The Queen is Head of State for Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and many other nations around the world. If she is no longer fit for duty she needs to begin considering her position.

What she cannot do is ask her son to take on any of her work. Such a move would be no more acceptable than a Prime Minister asking his son to chair cabinet meetings or attend international summits.

If the work of the Head of State is as important as monarchists and republicans both claim, we must be clear about who is our Head of State. It would not be unreasonable to ask the Queen to retire to make way for her successor.

But this begs another question; are we happy with the prospect of King Charles III (or King George VII, a title he has been reported to prefer)? The role of King is to be impartial and apolitical, which Charles has not been in the past. Clearly, judging from his recently publicised diaries, he is not likely to embrace impartiality in the future. He has made his choice regarding his role in life, and it does not fit with the idea of monarchy. It is no good arguing he will change his ways when he becomes King; the damage is done.

The British people have certainly not warmed to the idea of a future King Charles. Only last week a national poll put support for Charles succeeding his mother at just 37%. And skipping a generation to William,



(a constitutional impossibility), wouldn't do the monarchy much good, as only 39% supported William as the next King. A recent poll conducted in Australia made it clear that the Australian people are also unhappy with the idea of King Charles III, the prospect pushing support for a republic clearly into the majority.

For the republican movement in the

UK, and throughout the Commonwealth, the next ten years will represent an historic opportunity to champion our cause. Indeed, symptomatic of this was the launch last year of *Common Cause*, an alliance of republican movements from around the Commonwealth, which aims to capitalise on the recent upsurge in debate on this issue.

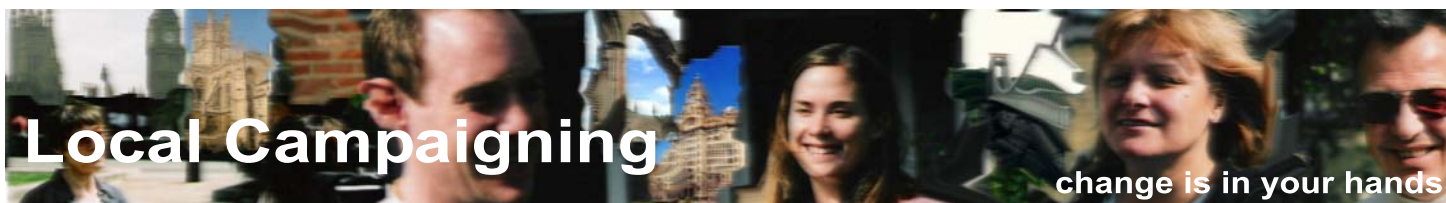
An ageing Queen and unpopular successor in waiting will illustrate more clearly than ever that the hereditary system is deeply flawed. With the first succession in this modern era of high speed, high tech and popularised media fast approaching, the automatic acceptance of a new monarch will be conspicuously absent. Unlike 1952, when Elizabeth II succeeded her father with a cozy inevitability, questions will be asked. Is Charles really the best we have to offer as Head of State? Is this really a system we want to live with in the twenty first century?

In my view it is inevitable that Australia will become a republic. Already Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean are taking that same step to a democratic alternative, planning to drop the Queen within the next few years. It is inconceivable that Australia would not follow suit. All that is required is a fair choice and another opportunity to opt for an Australian Head of State.

An Australian republic will give a huge boost to the UK republican movement. For the first time we will witness a prosperous nation, living in a time of peace and with a political system not unlike our own, abolish the monarchy. Australia will lead the way in showing that such a move will not be revolutionary, will not be traumatic and will only enhance the democratic system.

So, as the Queen continues to celebrate her birthday (the official one is in June), she might consider how best to respond to the inevitable republican debate that will be a feature of her twilight years. With shrinking public duties, an unpopular son taking an ever greater role and the Australian people showing the world how a modern democracy can become a republic, there is every reason to believe she will be the last British monarch to die in office. ■

This article was originally published in *The Age*, Melbourne, Australia.



The Pen is Mightier... (Part 2)

Tapping into existing local political networks can often be the easiest and most effective way of promoting Republic says WILLIAM SUMMERS.

In the last edition of this magazine I talked about how you can help our campaign by lobbying your MP. It's a plain political fact that we won't secure a referendum on the monarchy until our politicians give us their widespread backing. Thankfully it is also an established fact of politics that elected representatives will 'convert' to a cause in their droves once we have a majority support amongst the country's voters. It's not our job, I argued, to harass MPs and others into pushing their heads above the parapet. Rather we must concentrate on swinging public opinion in order to offer the political cover to do so.

Consider this: just as there are many MPs who support our campaign but are unwilling to say it too loudly, so too there are many people in your home town, village or city who would support us if only they had the invitation to do so.

We want to be heard by everyone of course, but I'm particularly referring now to the 'politically active' (small 'p') members of the community. Those who already give their time, money or name to a cause are more likely to do so again. This is a primed audience, and just letting them know about the existence of a serious campaign to abolish the monarchy is likely to get results, or at the very worst, invoke some interesting debate!

Britain is home to a plethora of political groups - not just local political parties, but university societies, Charter 88 supporters and local Amnesty International groups just to

name a few. They come in all shapes and sizes, and range across the political spectrum, but they have one thing in common: a willingness to get actively involved in a cause. Tapping into their networks can be not only productive, but is also often very simple.

Why not try finding your local political groups on the internet and sending them a quick e-mail* to find out if they are interested in Republic? A friendly message with a link to our website should do the trick.

You don't have to be part of an established local Republic group to do some leg work for our campaign, though local activists may also like to think about meeting with potentially supportive local organisations. Perhaps you can even give a brief talk outlining our case for an elected head of state? (Graham Smith or I can give some guidance on this if desired).

And don't forget to write to your local elected representatives. Local councillors of all political colours are likely to take an interest in Republic's mission, and there are literally thousands of them to target. A polite e-mail or phone call to each councillor in your area will undoubtedly unearth new supporters, meaning our campaign can become even louder and stronger. The more official supporters we have, the faster we are likely to achieve our goal. Just a few minutes of your time can really give a boost to our campaign in your area.

Finally, the easiest, cheapest and most enjoyable (!) way to spread the word of republicanism is to simply keep talking about it. Tell your friends, your family and your work colleagues. Tell them about Republic and what a positive thing republicanism is. Take the opportunity to make our campaign a talking point, and if you can, hand out some of our Top 5 Reasons cards to those who may be interested in

supporting us. (These are available *free* from Republic, simply email Graham Smith at g.smith@republic.org.uk or call 08708 508 825).

So when the talk about Big Brother or Wayne Rooney's metatarsal bone dies down, don't be afraid to pipe up with your own topic: "Who would you vote for as our first elected head of state?" You'll be amazed how many agree it's time for change. ■

* Sending 'spam' (unsolicited group emails) can be counter-productive, so be sure to personalise your correspondence rather than sending it to large groups. This is not only polite, but you are also more likely to get results this way.

ROAD SHOW UPDATE

The Republic Road Show has recently travelled to Sheffield and Brighton.

Both meetings provoked a great deal of debate about republicanism and helped Republic recruit new members.

The Brighton Road Show was addressed by Norman Baker MP, the member of parliament for Lewes.

Norman explained in great detail why he felt the inheritance of public office was wrong, and the damage deference does to our political system.

The Road Show concept is to be extended in future months, to include visits to existing groups and to address existing audiences, such as local branches of parties, unions and other campaign organisations. This is aimed at increasing our capacity to reach a wider audience with the Road Shows. If you know of any local groups or organisations that would like to hear from Republic please let us know; simply email enquiries@republic.org.uk or call 08708 508 825. ■

www.republic.org.uk/groups